

EX PART 177 LATE FILED

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Government Affairs

William R. Pitts, Jr.
Vice President, Government Affairs

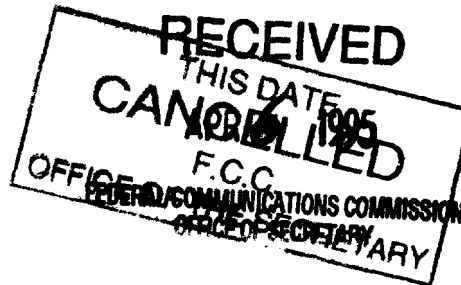
March 3, 1995

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Honorable Reed Hundt
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, N.W., Rm. 814
Washington, D.C. 20515



Dear Chairman Hundt:

I am forwarding to you a letter from Jennifer Trias, President of ABC Children's Entertainment, which sets the record straight regarding the erroneous article yesterday by Ellen Edwards of The Washington Post.

As Jennie points out not only did the article misstate the facts regarding ABC's current children's schedule but it ignores ABC's solid commitment to providing educational and pro-social programming for children. Contrary to the Post article, the cancellation of "Cro" did not result in a reduction of educational or pro-social programming for children. In fact, "Cro" was not canceled out in favor of "Dumb and Dumber" (as the article suggested), but rather will be replaced by "The New Adventures of Madeline," an ACE Award-winning series. As a result, the ABC Network continues to program four hours of educational or pro-social children's programming on Saturday morning.

In closing, I want to emphasize that we take our public service commitment to children seriously. Capital Cities/ABC, Inc. has sought to meet that commitment not only with the programming described above, but with significant public service campaigns directed to children, as well. One of our major public service campaigns directed to children is "Children First." "Children First" is a \$25 million per-year campaign in which ABC delivers positive-action-oriented messages stressing how adults can help children overcome obstacles that inhibit their growth and learning potential.

I hope you will take the opportunity to read the attached letter which clearly reaffirms our commitment to children's educational programming.

Sincerely,

Bill

William R. Pitts
Vice President

WRP/smk

Attachment

cc: FCC Commissioners

No. of Copies rec'd 241
List A B C D E



March 2, 1995

Ms. Ellen Edwards
The Washington Post
1550 15th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20071

Dear Ellen:

Your article today stated that the ABC Television Network has just "two educational children's programs on its Saturday morning schedule." Not only is this statement factually wrong, but the article left the mistaken impression that ABC, in deciding not to renew the series "Cro" for the 1995-96 season, will be reducing its number of series that qualify as "educational" or "pro-social" under the Children's Television Act.

ABC's current Saturday morning schedule for children includes four series -- not two -- that qualify under the Act: "Cro," "Fudge," "Free Willy" and the "ABC Weekend Special." While your article correctly notes that "Free Willy" is considered educational, it neglects to cite "Fudge" and the "ABC Weekend Special." Moreover, the schedule we recently announced for the season beginning this Fall also includes four educational series: "Fudge," "Free Willy," the "ABC Weekend Special" and "The New Adventures of Madeline." So, even though "Cro" is leaving the schedule, the addition of the ACE Award-winning "The New Adventures of Madeline" means that the number of children's educational series on ABC will not decrease, as your article clearly and mistakenly implied.

The decision not to renew "Cro" was a difficult one. It was very educational and very well produced, but unfortunately it did not prove to be as popular with children as we had hoped. But to suggest that we canceled "Cro" in order to make room for "Dumb and Dumber," a series that does not qualify as educational under the Act, is unfair and misleading. In fact, "Dumb and Dumber" technically will replace "Tales From The Cryptkeeper" at 9:00-9:30 a.m. But the main point is that our three series changes announced last month did not result in a reduction in the amount of educational programming for children as defined by the Act. We canceled one series that qualifies and two that do not; and we added one series that qualifies and two that do not.

Beyond these factual errors, your article is regrettable in light of ABC's historic role in the forefront of providing educational programming for children. For example, even before the Children's Television Act went into effect in 1992, ABC had long aired the "ABC Afterschool Specials," which is now going into its 24th season; the "ABC Weekend Special," now going into its 19th season; and the Emmy and Humanitas Award-winning "New Adventures of Winnie the Pooh," which aired during 1988-92. The "Afterschool Specials" and "Winnie the Pooh" series are actually cited in the legislative history of the Children's Television Act as examples of the type of programming the Act was designed to encourage. In addition, ABC airs "Schoolhouse Rock," a series of 2-3 minute educational vignettes, twice every Saturday. These vignettes focus on grammar, math, science, history, personal finance, computers and other educational topics of interest to children.

As President of ABC Children's Entertainment, I can assure you that ABC fully supports the goals of the Children's Television Act, and we believe both our current and our announced Saturday morning schedules reflect a positive and continued commitment to providing educational and pro-social programming for children. In sum, contrary to your article today, ABC is in no way reducing its commitment to children's educational programming. I hope you will agree that these facts deserve clarification as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennie Trias". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jennie Trias
President
ABC Children's Entertainment